

News release

6 April 2007

IPCC - Working Group II Reports

Scientists meeting in Brussels this week, as members of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), have today (Friday 6 April 2007) presented their Summary for Policymakers to government representatives from around the world.



As a leading climate research centre, the Met Office has played a key role in the IPCC process.

- The UK's national weather service was a lead contributor to the scientific effort for [Working Group I](#), which reported in February 2007.
- For [Working Group II](#), as well as providing further scientific evidence on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability, the Met Office has hosted the IPCC's Technical Support Unit. This unit pulls together the global research effort that goes into the report and ensures that deadlines are met in delivering the report to the IPCC.

The summary report released today, has examined the current scientific understanding of impacts of climate change on the Earth's systems, their vulnerability and capacity to adapt. Looking at over 75 individual studies, using in excess of 29,000 data sets, this unprecedented scientific effort has found that all continents are already experiencing the effects of climate change. Over the last three decades, human activity has had a discernible influence on many of the planet's systems.

The content of the report is wide-ranging, laying out predicted impacts for all continents and identifying six major systems with specific detail.

Some of the main findings are in the following areas.

1. Fresh water resources and their management

- Impacts on water resources could be geographically extensive and in some locations dramatic. As the planet warms it is highly likely that, depending on location, there will be an increase in the frequency and severity of floods and droughts.

2. Food, fibre and forest products

- Crop yield is projected to increase in temperate regions for a local mean temperature rise of 1-3 °C, and then decrease beyond that in some regions.
- In tropical areas, crop yield is projected to decrease, even with relatively modest rises of 1-2 °C in local temperature, increasing the risk of hunger.

3. Ecosystems

- Increased risk of extinction, among 20-30% of plant and animal species, is likely if the global temperature increase exceeds 1.5-2.5 °C.
- In the second half of this century terrestrial ecosystems will see net carbon uptake weaken or reverse.

4. Coastal areas and low-lying areas

- There is high confidence that these areas will be under increased pressure from changes in climate and human activity.
- Increases in sea-surface temperatures of 1-3 °C are projected to result in a major decline of most corals.
- Many millions more people will become vulnerable to flooding due to sea-level rise by the 2080s.

5. Health

- Projected changes to the climate will affect the health of millions of people worldwide. The changes will be most felt by those least able to adapt, such as the poor, the very young and the elderly.

6. Industry, settlement and society

- Areas most likely to be affected are the poorer, often rapidly expanding communities near rivers and coasts which use climate-sensitive resources and are prone to extreme weather.
- Where extreme weather events become more intense and or more frequent, their economic and social costs are predicted to increase.

The report highlights current knowledge about responding to climate change, emphasising the point that future vulnerability not only depends on climate change, but also on development in key areas. It emphasises that more needs to be done to take research forward and give policymakers more detailed information in the future.

[For the full report see the IPCC web site](#)

[More about IPCC Fourth Assessment Report](#)

[Met Office Consulting](#)

Notes:

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to improve the understanding of climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation. Drawing together all the major research from around the world, the IPCC today releases the second of the summary statements that go into the **Fourth Assessment Report: Climate Change 2007**.
- The Met Office is the UK's national weather service and delivers world-class research on climate change and its impacts to government and business.
- The approval session on the Summary of Policy Makers for the Working Group III volume will take place on 4 May 2007 in Bangkok, Thailand.
- The publication of the Working Group III report is expected in October 2007.

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